

Minister for Public Health and Women's Health submission of 21 December 2023

PE2048/D: Review the FAST stroke awareness campaign

Thank you for the response of the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee following its consideration of PE2048 at its meeting of 6 December. The Committee asks if the Scottish Government has considered using the BE FAST model to help raise awareness of the symptoms of strokes and, if the Scottish Government does not intend to base its awareness raising work around the BE FAST test, what the reason for this is.

I mentioned in my previous reply that in addition to FAST campaigns, we will also consider how awareness of the less common symptoms of stroke can be increased. We are currently working to establish the existing levels of awareness of stroke symptoms and FAST through polling research. More detailed research exploring awareness of stroke symptoms and FAST is planned following the conclusion of this work and this will help inform future public awareness campaign content.

The 2023 edition of [The National Clinical Guideline for Stroke](#) states that more research into improving public awareness, and the appropriate action upon suspecting a stroke, is needed. Regarding pre-hospital identification of stroke, the Guideline also states that further evidence is required before a recommendation regarding the use of other screening tools that screen for non-FAST stroke symptoms could be made.

In this context, we do not currently plan to deviate from supporting the use of FAST, although we will of course regularly review this position based on the best available evidence. The National Advisory Committee for Stroke will be asked to review any emerging evidence regarding public awareness and stroke screening tools and provide advice to the Scottish Government regarding the most appropriate action.

We will continue to work with our third sector partners and wider stakeholders to consider the most effective way of raising public awareness of stroke symptoms, including support for the delivery of

FAST campaigns and consideration of how awareness of less common symptoms of stroke can be raised.

Yours sincerely,
Jenni Minto MSP